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URBAN VELO

Bicycle Culture on the Skids

Issue #35 • February 2013



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URBAN VELO

Issue #35

February 2013

Brad Quartuccio Editor brad@urbanvelo.org

Jeff Guerrero Publisher jeff@urbanvelo.org

“Leave me in peace; everybody takes dope.”

—Jacques Anquetil, first five time winner of the Tour de France, in a 1960s era French TV interview.

On the cover: Victor Blast bombing the hill on East Broad Street in Richmond, VA during the 2012 NACCC. Photo by Takuya Sakamoto, www.newyorkbikedreams.com

Co-conspirators: Alex Hansen, Krista Carlson, Ken Stanek, Taliah Lempert, Liam Gibson, Dimithri Wignarajah, David Hoffman and Andy Singer

Urban Velo, PO Box 9040, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Urban Velo is a reflection of the cycling culture in current day cities. Our readers are encouraged to contribute their words and art.

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Urban Velo is now available on the App Store so you can view issues and subscribe with your iPad.

Urban Velo has always been designed with a page size roughly the same as the iPad screen, and we are now able to take advantage of the iPad's display and magazine browsing capabilities to deliver a high resolution digital version of the magazine to you. This is as close to print as it gets, with the addition of links and navigation. Issues #33–35 are currently available, with more issues to be added in the future.

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Left: In China's third largest city of Guangzhou back alleyways and noodleshops go hand in hand, but what is surprising about the new world economic powerhouse is how bike friendly the country is as a whole. Photo by Alex Hansen, wegetweird.tumblr.com

EDITOR'S STATEMENT

By Brad Quartuccio



Out for lunch with Bike Pittsburgh Executive Director Scott Bricker and Advocacy Director Erok Boerer, planning for the next big win in local cycling. Photo by Brad Quartuccio

Welcome to the new normal—you have been part of making it happen, and may not have even noticed. We are no longer edgy rebels, the days of recognizing everyone on a bike in town is over. While it has its growing pains and the allure of being part of a certain in-the-know underground wanes, this is a positive thing all around. Good for you, good for your friends and good for your city.

Before the big pay day of separated bike lanes and sensible traffic enforcement we unfortunately have to experience a certain level of vitriol from a small percentage of other road users as the bicycle numbers continue to swell. It only takes one to ruin your day or worse, but it is important to remember that even in the face of increasing numbers of bike/car collisions the overwhelming majority of drivers are reasonable, law abiding people. It's the outliers that cause the problems, and anecdotally at least the past year seems to have brought forth a new level of frustration amongst hot head motorists. Locally I've heard the term "extinction burst" applied to the phenomenon—that as bicycle use increases and reaches the proverbial critical mass there is a certain motoring element so resistant to the change that they are acting out with increasing aggression. The "reward" of scaring people off of the road isn't occurring, and eventually the behavior should cease and we can all travel the roads together in peace.

In the name of self preservation and the safety of your friends, there is no better time than right now to lend a hand to local bike advocacy efforts. Volunteer, donate, create your own organization to help others navigate safely. Every bit counts, every dollar helps. We are winning.



We want your words. Send your editorial contributions to brad@urbanvelo.org

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PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

By Jeff Guerrero



A friend of mine has been living in the United States for about nine months. Back in Japan, his primary form of transportation was a motorcycle, but since it would have been prohibitively expensive to bring a CB250 on the plane he was left with the options of bicycling, riding the bus, or walking. As a fellow member of the two-wheeled cult, he naturally threw a leg over his host-family's loaner bike and headed for the college part of town. That was his first and last foray into bicycle transportation in America.

No, thankfully, he didn't suffer any sort of gruesome injury, nor did he encounter any unusually aggressive road rage. Nonetheless, he quickly determined that the culture of the American roadways was completely devoid of courtesy. And as such, it would be nothing short of unsafe for him to use a bicycle, or even a motorcycle, for transportation during his stay. And mind you, this isn't someone who makes rash decisions, nor is it someone who's inherently timid.

I found his reaction particularly interesting because I consider the route between his home and the Uni-

versity of Pittsburgh to be rather tame by American city standards. While there's no dedicated bike lanes between Point A and B, there are a few sharrows. And some of the roads are even wide enough for a car to safely pass a cyclist without crossing the center line. Granted, the final stretch does involve negotiating a left turn from a four-lane, one-way road. But even that's not so bad if you time it right...

My friend's tale brought two things to mind. First, why aren't we, as a society, more courteous? It seems we're always in a rush, whether it's at the grocery store or commuting to and from work. I have a theory that it's a vicious circle—many people have never been shown courtesy, therefore they in turn never show anyone else courtesy. In social circles it's just unpleasant, but when it comes to operating motor vehicles, it's downright dangerous.

Pondering such inherent danger lead me to me to consider whether we (urban cyclists) have become desensitized to the dangers that we face every day. Or are we all just a little bit foolhardy?

I suppose it's a little bit of both. While I've mellowed out with age and don't blast through stop signs like I did a few years ago, I certainly don't think twice about riding out into rush-hour traffic, trusting that the driver behind me will stop looking at their iPhone long enough to notice the vulnerable cyclist in front of them. I may be mistaken, but I generally feel that given the choice, most motorists would rather not hit a cyclist, if for no other reason than that their auto insurance premium might increase.

When it comes down to it, if riding a bike in traffic is to be popularly considered foolhardy, I'll take it as a compliment. I think we all would, even if we don't necessarily leave home in the morning thinking, "I'm courageous for braving these city streets."

Gandhi once said, "Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality." It doesn't take any courage to ride a bus, or to drive a car. But I would wager that it's a minority of cyclists who consider bicycling to be anything less than spiritual experience.



Urban Velo issue #35, February 2013. Dead tree print run: 5000 copies. Issue #34 online readership: 55,000+



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All-City^{MPLS}

i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Jamoll McKay
LOCATION: Baltimore, MD
OCCUPATION: Police Officer

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

Living in Baltimore is like riding in multiple cities from various parts of the country all at once. Within a matter of minutes you can be downtown mashing through traffic, chilling by the water in Fells Point, or uptown cranking through Charles Village making your way back toward the culture filled east side.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

I have to say my favorite city I've ridden in has been

Baltimore. Baltimore is the city in which I began riding in, and the city for which my love runs deep. No other city can take her place.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I also love riding in the city because it's therapeutic. After a stressful tour at work, I get on my bike and mash down to the waterfront of downtown. Seeing and dealing with the stresses of my job can be very tiring on the body and mind. As strange as it may seem, I need to hear the heartbeat (car horns blowing, construction sites going, and big buses moving) of the city to unwind. After all, the city of "BMORE" is the love of my life.

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NAME: Rich Collier

LOCATION: New York, NY

OCCUPATION: Television Producer

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in New York City so that's not an easy question. Some days riding here is challenging and difficult... and ridiculously dangerous. Other times it's cathartic and invigorating... and a religious experience. Over the years I've crashed, I've been caught in cloud bursts and snow storms, I've been ticketed and hassled but I've never regretted choosing my bike over the subway or a cab. I really don't think there's a faster, more rewarding way to get around the island.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

I loved commuting by bike when I lived in West Hollywood back in the early '90s. After work I'd often ride up to the Griffith Observatory to decompress and take in the view, but too often the air pollution made my lungs ache and the view was obscured by a thick layer of smog that hung over the city like a filthy, old Brillo pad. New York City is my favorite city for rid-

ing, but I'd like to take Roll Play on the road this year and broaden my radius of experience a bit. If things continue to go well and the planets align I'll be riding and shooting in cities all over the country and all over world this summer.

Why do you love riding in the city?

One of the reasons I like riding in the city is because I'm a bit of a control freak. New York City has a great public transportation system but I hate being at its mercy. There's nothing worse than cooling your heels, waiting for a train or the bus when you could be on your bike getting there already. And sitting in city traffic with or without the meter running is pretty damn torturous. Tearing up the congested city streets is therapeutic for me. I'm relieving stress, I'm exercising and I am in the driver's seat.

nutcase

STREET SPORT HELMETS



Denva Jackson

Harvard Graduate Student,
in the History of Art and
Architecture/Spin Instructor

Darlington, South Carolina USA

Bike: **Clarity Diamondback, Hybrid**

Bike Name: **Princess Katerina**

Helmet: **Modern Dots**

*"I think biking should be fun. It's not
about going faster, but getting there
with an entirely new perspective."*



i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Myrna Gatica
LOCATION: New York, NY
OCCUPATION: Science Teacher

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live pretty close to Manhattan where I work. It is awesome to ride in Queens with good bike lanes, and the ride over the Queensboro Bridge is quick. Riding in Manhattan usually is an eye-opener and helps me wake up in the morning.

What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

So far I have only rode my bike in NYC and I got to say I don't think there is any other city to ride your bike in just like ours, but I am biased!

Why do you love riding in the city?

To be honest, I love feeling like I am on the edge of life and death. Riding through midtown rush hour at 8 AM is incredibly frightening but at the same time exhilarating. There is no other feeling like it. There is no other way I can feel it.

Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city... Poetry anyone?

You are in control of your life, utterly and completely and on a bike you can feel that the most.

You become connected to the world around you better and almost have a little awakening.

Plus it relieves my stress from working with kids all day.

NAME: Trevor S.
LOCATION: Greensboro, NC
OCCUPATION: Student, Amateur Race Organizer

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I'm originally from San Bernardino CA but reside in Greensboro for school. Greensboro streets can get sketchy but there are some amazing trails and parks to ride around. Most of the cycling community is older spandex clad people, but there's some cool college aged people who ride as well.

Why do you love riding in the city?

I love riding my bike because it's not just a trip from Point A to Point B, it's a journey. I can see all of the little communities, mom and pop shops, and local restaurants that you would never know about riding in a car. You're not just traveling to a destination, you're experiencing the city.

Or just say whatever you want about riding in the city... Poetry anyone?

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i ♥ riding in the city



NAME: Avezine

LOCATION: Malang, Indonesia

OCCUPATION: Student

Where do you live and what's it like riding in your city?

I live in Malang, East-Java, Indonesia. Malang is a city that is placed in the middle of several mountains, the weather is very cool and fresh. Malang has a lot of hills, it is really interesting when you ride a fixed gear up and down them. We just started a fixed gear club called MLG-fg/ss. We have weekly night rides and it's just fun to ride with some friends.

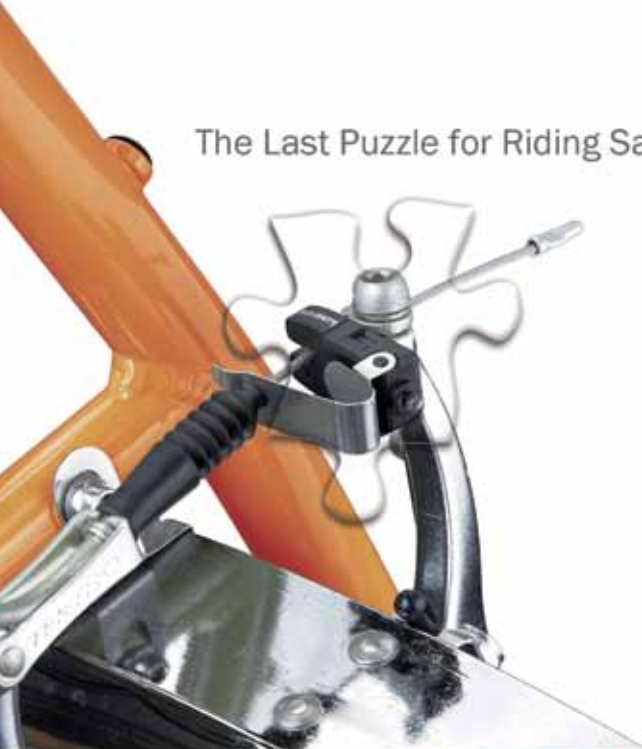
What was your favorite city to ride in, and why?

Malang is a good city to ride in. The weather, people and the traffic are awesome. But if I have an opportunity, I would really like to ride my fixed gear in Bali. I heard that most of people in Bali ride a bike, with few of them on motorcycles.

Why do you love riding in the city?

It is a pleasure to ride my bike, I can find new places and meet new people. Of course, it is fun challenging myself to find a shortcut when I am in a hurry.

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Everyday Cycling, the latest pocket-size book from Portland bike blogger Elly Blue, is a handy little guide to feeling comfortable in the saddle and on the road. In under 130 pages, Blue takes readers from taking the bike out your front door on through to the basics of bike life, how to carry anything on a bike, and approaching advocacy. Available for \$10. www.microcosmpublishing.com



Surly's latest wool jersey is simply one of the nicest of its kind. Based in Minneapolis, these guys know what's what when it comes to cold weather cycling gear, and this full-zip jersey is right on the money. It's 100% Merino wool, available in black or gray, with short or long-sleeves, in sizes XS-XXL and it comes in men's and women's models. The jersey pictured retails for about \$150. www.surlybikes.com



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Kevin "Squid" Bolger

Brentwood



Kevin 'Squid' Bolger is an original. He has been a NYC bicycle messenger since 1992. He is the President of the NYC Bicycle Messenger Foundation as well as the founder of Cyclehawk and the Velo City Tour. Currently he is riding with Zipments, a pioneer in the same day delivery service, which is experiencing explosive growth.

From alley-cats, to The World Messenger Championships, Squid has had a front row seat in the evolution of messenger/urban bike culture. While also having a hand in the direction of where it is all going.

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CRANKSGIVING

FROM CRANKS TO FOOD BANKS

HITTING THE STREETS TO HELP A FEW FOLKS EAT

By Krista Carlson

Thirteen years ago, New York City messenger Antonio “Tone” Rodrigues had an idea for an alleycat race that could help feed some of New York’s neediest. Since then, the concept has been adopted and adapted in dozens of cities around the country.

“In 1999, after being a full time messenger for two years, I decided to do my own alleycat. It was meant to be a way of giving back because a lot of messengers were living on the poverty line,” said Tone. “There was actually one or two kitchens that some of the messengers I knew would go to. So it was a way of giving back that incorporated the alleycat.” Tone designed Cranksgiving so that it is modeled after a messenger’s work day. With a variety of locations to visit, riders must decide for themselves the best route to take. An added benefit of this format is that it basically eliminates the need for checkpoint volunteers. “Typically you gotta strongarm your friends to stand out on some corner, but at Cranksgiving I don’t have that problem and technically the cashiers are my checkpoint volunteers, but

they’re paid.”

A handful of people came out for the first Cranksgiving, and while that small event was itself a great success, it has come to be one of the most attended and long-standing bike events in many places.

It didn’t take long for Cranksgiving to spread. The route it took out of New York involved a chance meeting in Europe. It was the summer of 2001 and Tone was at the Cycle Messenger World Championships in Budapest where he met a couple of Los Angeles messengers, Melissa Carr and Douglas Forrest.

“We’d never thrown an alleycat before,” Forrest recalls, “So Melissa and I, that fall, we held our first Cranksgiving. We had [Tone] send over to us some information about how he set up the race, so we kind of followed his pattern of an alleycat style race where you just have money on hand and you go and buy products with that according to what the manifest says.”

“The first ones were all simple,” said DTLA messenger Ozzie Lopez. “We’d always do it the day before Thanksgiving. Everybody’d all get off of work and we’d



Groceries after the 2012 NYC Cranksgiving event. Photo by Ken Stanek

meet at the bridge around seven. It was all messengers at first, so we all started at the bridge, ended at the bridge.”

Lopez, who has carried on the tradition of Cranksgiving in L.A. since Carr’s passing in 2011, said the race is important to him for several reasons. “The food goes to Para Los Ninos, which [serves] the Westlake area, Rampart, Belmont Heights. I grew up in that area, so the food that we get goes to that organization right there, and then people from that neighborhood actually get the food. The second part is it’s a fun race that Melissa was really into, so I don’t want that to die, because she gave so much to that. She cared about it so much.”

After spreading to Los Angeles—where Cranksgiving has become the city’s longest-running alleycat—the charity race caught on like a slow-moving fire; one, two cities a year at first; then a few more, then half a dozen. While many are modeled after Tone’s Cranksgiving, others uphold their own identity: In Washington, D.C., Neil Irvin and Jason Buda organized Gobbling for Goods for the first time this past Thanksgiving, and in San Francisco Jenny Oh Hatfield is part of a group of cyclists who have coordinated Super Market Street Sweep for the last six years.

“The idea to start The Supermarket Street Sweep came about during an informal online chat on the cycling forum, www.sffixed.com. Several members

thought it would be great to throw a holiday event that would benefit the community, and I drew inspiration from the annual Cranksgiving event in New York City, where I lived for 13 years,” Hatfield said. “We decided to change the name and always host our event the first weekend in December, but the concept is essentially the same: racers zipping around San Francisco to pick up groceries from designated supermarkets within a 4-hour time frame. I really love the concept of this race for several reasons: Participants can directly see the benefits of their efforts. It’s not some abstract donation where they don’t know where their money is going. When racers unload their food at the Food Bank and see the number for the total weight of food rising on the scale, they get really excited seeing how much they were physically able to bring in.”

Close to a dozen new cities began hosting their own food drive bike event in 2012. While most organizers model their events after Tone’s, some have chosen to hold Cranksgiving simply as a bike ride and not a race. Bay area participants can choose to race in either a Speed or Cargo category.

“It’s a highly adaptable event,” explains Ken Stanek, who has taken over the reigns in New York since Tone left in 2006. This year’s attendance in NYC jumped by more than 100, to 280 participants. “It was by far the biggest one we’ve had. It’s changing a lot from being a messenger event. It was nuts,” Stanek said. “I have no way of actually knowing how much food we collected,” We filled up a room in the church. The people at the church were so grateful.”

The ride itself can be nuts, too. Racers run in and out of the markets, criss-crossing one another on various paths in the aisles and in the streets, filling up their bags as they go with cans of corn and cranberry sauce, boxes of stuffing, potatoes, celery—all sorts of grocery items. Organizers work with their local charity of choice, whether it be a food bank, soup kitchen or shelter, and are able to meet the specific needs of the organization and their community.

“Since our food pantry only distributes nutritious groceries, I was so glad that the scavenger hunt took our needs into consideration and the collection accurately reflected the items we wanted most,” said Emily Schneider of D.C.’s Bread for the City. The food bank’s wish list included low-sugar cereals, canned tuna, brown rice and baby food. “Those items were immedi-

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Participants can directly see the benefits of their efforts. It's not some abstract donation where they don't know where their money is going.

ately placed on our shelves so clients could select the items that best suited their lifestyle and the needs of their families.”

Some manifests are composed of strictly requested items, dry goods, or the full roster of ingredients to make a turkey dinner with all the fixings. Pies and baked goods are often special treats for the people who are served by the organizations, and make for a tricky bonus item for cyclists to carry with care. Heavy items like turkeys and bags of potatoes at distant locations offer an additional challenge in some cities, and encourage some to bring their cargo bikes out for the affair.

“Sometimes we put stuff that's not on the list, because a lot of these kids want to have something really fun, you know, something good,” Lopez said. “So we'll throw in those things as bonus points. We go off the list, but then we also add some other stuff too, so there's a variety of food.”

The flavor and feel changes from place to place—you might be riding in the daytime on the weekend in below freezing weather, or on a weeknight under temperate conditions. It could be a race among the city's fast couriers, or a family-friendly cruise stopping at a few local groceries.

“From the get go in St. Louis we pushed off the race idea of this event,” said Patrick Van Der Tuin, executive director of the nonprofit organization St. Louis Bicycle Works, which hosts the event. “We simply hold a ride. It allows us to engage more people and bring in more food.” Nearly 800 people came out to the city's 7th Cranksgiving, bringing in more than 8000 food items. “We filled a 26-foot box truck to the brim,” Van Der Tuin said, adding that the piles of food put smiles on everyone's faces.

Whatever the format, the key ingredients are bikes, a local charity to receive donations, and no registration charge to participate. “As long as they are doing it on bikes and donating to a charity then

they are more than welcome to use the Cranksgiving name,” Tone said.

It's up to the cyclists to choose how much they spend buying food to donate. Typically the minimum amount to collect the basic items is around \$15. Often a list of bonus items will provide an opportunity to earn extra race points or contend for a “Most Generous” category.

“I really believe bikes can be good for social change, and charities are always something we can keep in mind,” said CJ Arayata, who began co-organizing Cranksgiving in Philadelphia in 2011, with Gary Wilpizeski. The pair began participating in the event in York, PA where Tone had brought the event after moving to the rural area with his wife. No longer attending school in York, Arayata and Wilpizeski were reluctant to make the drive to York, but still wanted to take part in the race.

“It seemed kind of puzzling to me that there wasn't one in Philly and it's already trickled to Nowheresville, Iowa,” Arayata said.

Hunger affects nearly 50 million people in the United States. City Harvest, which receives Cranksgiving donations in New York, helps feed more than one million New Yorkers annually. In Los Angeles, where more than 1.7 million Los Angeles county residents suffer from hunger, Cranksgiving benefits Para Los Niños, a nonprofit organization that serves more than 7000 low-income families a year through its network of education and wellness centers. The widespread success of charity bike races/rides like Cranksgiving is a way in which cyclists have been able to help alleviate hunger within their own communities.

“You're actually helping out other people, you know, it's not just about you,” Lopez said. “Other alleycats, when you race, it's about—you're like ‘I'm gonna win!’ You're just thinking about yourself. With Cranksgiving, you're actually thinking about other people that you might not even ever meet. You might actually bump into them, but you have no idea that you helped them out. It's not just for messengers, it's for everybody.”



Cranksgiving events are listed by city at www.cranksgiving.org. History, how-to information, and materials from the first eight years in New York can be found at www.cranksgiving.net.



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Andy's Bike, private collection
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Malcolm's Bike, collection of Malcolm Buick
2007 acrylic on paper 20" x 26"

Bicycle Paintings

by Taliah Lempert



Ryan's Freedom Deluxe, collection of Philip and Lesly Lempert
2011 oil on canvas 40" x 54"



Rollfast Tandem, collection of Josh and Adrienne Sherman
2007 oil on panel 24" x 36"



Brad's bike was set up with urban functionality in mind.

Bianchi San Jose Frameset

About a year ago a pair of Bianchi San Jose framesets fell off a truck, and both Brad and Jeff ended up with a new bike-building project on their hands.

The San Jose is a TIG welded, 100% chromoly steel frame and fork. While it's not as popular as Bianchi's Pista, the San Jose is a well loved bike. If you ask anybody who owns one they'll more than likely regale you with tales of how durable it is and how nice it rides.

For a \$399 frameset (frame, fork and headset) you would be hard pressed to find fault with the finish quality. The welds are clean and the paintjob flawless—a testament to state of the art Taiwanese manufacturing.

Designed with versatility in mind, the San Jose has a shoulder-friendly flattened top tube with top-mount cable routing and clearance for at least 35 mm tires, yet it's also ready to accept a rack and fenders like a good commuter bike should.

While the San Jose could be used as a cyclocross racing bike, most serious racers would likely consider any off-the-shelf chromoly frame too heavy. The geometry is an even bigger factor, as the seat tube angle is similar to that of a touring bike. While this promotes an upright riding position that puts less pressure on the rider's hands, the tradeoff is less power transferred to the pedals. The bottom bracket is higher than that of a typical road bike, but lower than a typical cyclocross bike. A lower bottom bracket generally equates to increased stability, while a taller bottom bracket allows you to pedal through corners or hop logs with less chance of getting hung up.

Ultimately, the great thing about the San Jose frameset is that it can be built up to suit a variety of riders with different needs and riding styles. Let's take a look at how two different cyclists built theirs.

Brad's Build

Less-than-racy cyclocross bikes tend to make great city bikes, and that's exactly the route I went down with my San Jose. The 59 cm weighs in with a 5.5 lb frame and 2.6 lb fork more suited to the daily grind than more svelte road and track frames, with clearance for the large volume road tires and fenders that I prefer for all-weather riding. I avoid referring to "standards" with bicycles as with each passing day the water becomes murkier with proprietary components, but the San Jose uses just about the most readily available choices out there, making it an easy task to build up with parts you may have on hand, and without breaking the bank. Having worked in the bike industry since my high school days I've managed to acquire quite the collection of spare parts in my basement and built my San Jose up accordingly, using a mix of road and mountain parts stashed away for such an occasion. The only hitch in the build up came with the 130 mm rear spacing—good luck finding a 130 mm spaced single speed hub, I used a couple of spacers to split the difference with a 120 mm track hub and called it a day.

After a solid year of use as my around-town transportation and grocery getter, I have nothing but praise for the San Jose. Everyone says it and it still rings true, there is nothing like the ride of steel. The handling is predictable, the ride comfortable. With my well used CETMA rack up front I'm able to carry boxes to the Post Office by day and cases of beer to friend's houses by night, and all in style. Though it's not the first feature to stand out, the flattened top tube is a nice bonus for taking the bike in and out of the house, up and down stairs. I'm a fan of versatile bikes, and as long as single speed is your flavor of choice and you're not too picky about the scale, the San Jose fits the bill.

Jeff's Build

I had been thinking about building a single speed cyclocross bike for some time. Coming from a mountain bike background, even when I'm out riding a skinny tire road bike in the city, I typically can't resist the call of the wild—shortcuts through the park, gravel paths beside railroad tracks, etc. And while I've had my share of cyclocross style bikes, the simplicity of a single speed was all the more appealing.

After initially trying a flat bar, I decided to go with a nice, wide, Truvativ riser bar. I chose Surly mountain bike cranks because I wanted to stick with a relatively small chainring for clearance. And with knobby cyclocross tires, my destination would ultimately be the woods, so having a tall gear for the road was secondary to having a low gear for soft dirt and steep hills.

The only major adjustment to my initial build was the addition of a Paul seatpost with 26 mm of setback. Even though the San Jose has a generous top tube length, I felt a bit cramped with a riser bar instead of a drop bar and thought a longer stem would put my riding position too far forward.

On trail, the bike performs exactly as I had hoped. It's totally capable of traversing the local mountain bike trails, but without a suspension fork and high-volume tires, even the relatively easy trails within the city limits remain interesting. Another side benefit to this particular build is that it's a good extreme conditions commuter. With its knobby tires and wide bars, snow and slop have been easy to tackle.

www.bianchiusa.com



Jeff's bike was set up for hitting the trails.



Portland Design Works Danger Zone Tail Light

The Portland Design Works Danger Zone is their flagship blinkie light, with a pair of half-Watt LEDs calling out your spot in the road. It's a fresh take on the clamshell, AAA powered blinkie, and a step up from what you used last decade.

It's easy to overlook AA and AAA powered lights in this era of USB rechargeable versions. The price of the light can be reduced since a relatively expensive rechargeable battery and the charging circuit aren't included, and the overall lifespan of the blinkie doesn't depend on potentially flimsy charging ports or limited battery cycles. Easy to replace and readily available, they'll never leave you dark on a trip away from home due to a misplaced power cord or lack of available USB ports. Alkaline cells have a longer shelf life than rechargeables, and in my experience last much longer (especially in cold weather) and give a longer fading warning period that your lights are going to die. I can't even begin to count how many times rechargeable lights have left me riding home in the dark having only been charged a day or two earlier and used

sparingly in between.

The two half-Watt LEDs of the Danger Zone can be set in steady on, a calm oscillating flash or an "a-HA!" mode that matches the beat of the only A-ha! song you've ever heard. It is a good looking light, and snaps together tight while still being able to be opened without tools or broken fingernails. In some two years of use of one of my Danger Zone lights I've yet to have it open up over a pothole or leak enough water to short out, unlike most other clamshell designs I've used. I do wish the clip on the back was more robust given the \$38 price — hate to have it fall off without warning. While a locking clip may be asking a lot without an increase in price, a couple of holes to securely tie the light to a bike or bag with zip-ties isn't too much to ask. I like the positive clicking, easy to find switch that I can work with even the thickest of my riding gloves.

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Mission Workshop Acre Series Trigger Riding Jacket

The Acre series is home to Mission Workshop's performance clothing and the Trigger riding jacket is their first piece in the line. Might as well cut to the chase—this is the top quality, North American made, great fitting, tech jacket you've always wanted, and it costs \$285. The cliché of getting what you pay for holds true with clothing as much as it does with bicycles or much anything else in life, and few reading this review would recommend the least expensive solution to every problem. The Trigger is not the least expensive riding jacket on the market, but perhaps one of the nicest.

The Trigger is meant for those days where a light jacket or hoodie isn't going to cut it, but not quite for all out winter conditions. Perfect for those fall and spring rides in the 40s and 50s, or down through freezing with a thick wool layer underneath. The jacket is windproof and water resistant thanks to the Schoeller WB400 fabric, fine for

everything but a soaking rain, and rather well suited to the San Francisco weather Mission Workshop is familiar with.

The jacket is not a riding jacket in name only, and is made with on the bike comfort as top priority. It is cut for slender, stereotypically cyclist-shaped riders with a slightly extended tail and longer than normal sleeves for proper fit when in the drops, with a large left-hand access rear cargo pocket for small items. The cuffs feature thumb holes for an extra bit of hand warmth when you're caught without gloves, and the inside of the collar has a brushed texture so it doesn't chafe your neck and chin, or catch your whiskers. Inside the jacket there are small pockets on each side for a cell phone or small wallet, each with a headphone port if you're so inclined. The Trigger is trimmed at the cuff, collar and bottom with glass bead reflective piping for added visibility from car headlights.

Through the fall and winter I've been wearing this jacket for nearly every ride—'tis the season for cold weather and biting wind. At freezing or below temperatures around town I've found myself turning to a heavier shell than the Trigger, but it works well into the upper 20s if your plan is to keep moving. While it would affect the sleek look of the jacket, I do wish that it had pit zips and front hand pockets for off the bike use, though the rear pocket does lend a great place to stash a pair of gloves. When it comes to on the bike use in cool fall temperatures, this is my favorite riding jacket I've yet extensively used. A perfect fit for me, with the technical features to stay comfortable and worried about the ride and not the jacket.

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Planet Bike Borealis Winter Gloves

When the temperature dips it's all about keeping your core warm and insulating your extremities. Layering up your core is fairly straight forward, but hands and feet present a problem for many. It's just not easy to keep your fingers warm while still dextrous enough to operate on the bike. For cold temperature riding I've always been a fan of "lobster claw" style gloves that combine fingers for warmth and have been using the Planet Bike Borealis gloves for a few seasons now. The Borealis was updated to the pictured version a couple of seasons back, featuring a windproof and water resis-

tant semi-lobster claw shell and removable fleece liner. These quickly became my favorite go-to glove in cold temperatures, and when the weather started to turn a couple of months ago I rushed to dig them out from their summer hideaway.

The Borealis gloves are billed as a 3-in-1 system meaning that you can wear them as fleece liner only, shell only, or the two of them together. Not only does this aid in the versatility of the gloves, giving them an overall wider temperature range of use, it also solves two of the main problems with heavy gloves—drying them out at the end of the ride, and the danger of inverting a sewn in liner and it never going back the same. Never having to worry about removing a sweaty hand and not being able to right a wronged liner is a boon as far as I'm concerned, and I've never had one piece gloves that dry as quickly.

While I rarely wear the liner on its own, I frequently use only the Borealis shell once my usual work gloves aren't cutting it. Without the liner the shell is roomy and comfortable until just about freezing temperatures, which is when I begin to use the fleece inner glove. Combined I find I can comfortably ride into the mid-twenties Fahrenheit and uncomfortably get by into the high teens at which point I question how wise it is to ride much at all. The fit with the liner is significantly more snug, and should be taken into account before purchase. When possible, try these on before you buy. The tall cuff is welcome and provides enough jacket overlap to prevent the feeling of an AC vent heading up your sleeve, and the reflective piping can't hurt visibility, but I don't know how much it helps either. The back of the thumb is soft fleece so you don't grind off your nose or mouth wiping away a cold weather drip.

Overall, these are my favorite gloves for riding in cold weather. The separate middle and index finger give me enough dexterity to operate my shift and brake levers without issues, and the combined pinky and ring fingers help to keep my entire hand warm without sacrificing bar grip. At about \$40 for the pair I'd also have to say that the Borealis is a bargain beyond being warm. Nothing makes a 10 minute ride feel like an hour like cold hands, and these should keep you pedaling until you may want to think twice about it anyway. Available in five sizes S-XXL from your local shop or direct from Planet Bike. www.planetbike.com



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Problem Solvers Brake Stud Light Mount

Mounting your light down low has certain advantages—better depth perception, less chance of blinding oncoming drivers or riders with high powered lights, and free space on the bars. In my case bar space on my city commuter is not only in short supply due to my front cargo rack, but handlebar mounted lights can interfere with and are blocked by my typical cargo loads. In Urban Velo #33 we wrote up a DIY mid-level light mount solution for those with low rider rack mounts, and it prompted the folks at Problem Solvers to share their Brake Stud Light Mount with us. It's a simple kit that adds a 22 mm diameter light mount to just about any cantilever brake stud, no matter what kind of brake (or no brake) you may have on your bike. With a longer bolt and a reversible extension section that works with brakes with either exposed or recessed bushings, it's a quick installation that doesn't require any brake adjustment and gives you a light mount compatible with most handlebar mounted lights out there. I'm sure there are combinations of bike setup, brakes and light choice that don't work perfectly, but I've found it a flawless setup. Pictured here with the Gotham Defender anti-theft light, the Problem Solvers Brake Stud Light Mount tucks neatly under my front cargo rack and gives me a place to leave a light mounted to my commuter full time. It doesn't interfere with loading and unloading cargo, is never blocked by a large box, and in a couple of months of use it has yet to come loose or move. It does what it is designed to do, and does it well. The Brake Stud Light Mount weighs 58 g and is available for about \$30 from your local shop. www.problemsolversbike.com

Five Ten Dirtbag Lace-Up

The Five Ten Dirtbag was designed as a multi-sport shoe, so they'll work for skateboarding, cycling, etc. They're also a very nice casual shoe. From a performance standpoint, the biggest factor is the use of Stealth rubber.

Stealth rubber was developed by Five Ten's founder, Charles Cole, back in 1985. The idea was to create a rubber that could help rock climbers achieve greater traction as well as reduce fatigue by increasing its shock absorption capacity. The original formula was critically acclaimed, and new formulas of Stealth rubber were designed for specific applications. The Dirtbag uses Stealth Phantom rubber which allows for a non-marking outsole without sacrificing performance.

The Five Ten Dirtbag Lace-Up really does what it's claimed to do—it sticks to the pedals. This has made Five Ten's shoes especially popular with gravity assisted mountain biking enthusiasts. The \$95 Dirtbag shoes are notably comfortable, and they feel rather light (actual weight is 714 g per pair). The soles may be a bit soft and flexible for some cyclists' taste, but the tradeoff is that they're equally functional on or off the bike.

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STARE DEATH IN THE SNOUT

By Liam Gibson



It only lasts a split-second. A flash of something that couldn't be. What nature so patiently assembled, so hastily disassembled by the thump of a bumper. Legs don't belong there. Heads aren't meant to turn that way. The vultures hop a little as you pass, then return to their hooked pickings. This is their house. You're just passing through.

Cycling in America has many upsides. The endless, flowing curves that pull you on, up and into this vast land. Tarmac so smooth that even the most infrequent and smallest of pebbles registers princess-and-the-pea high on the perineal Richter scale. Shimmering columns of leafy gold and red pacify winter's sharpest breeze, whispering their encouragement. Space-rocket shaped silos sit immovably in rolling farmland. Rocking-chairs squeak on quiet porches. Skies have never been so blue.

And then you see it. A deer with its head facing the wrong way, passing a foot from your shin. A raccoon with no body, staring imploringly from the opposite lane. "Why me?" it pleads with its

one remaining eye. A thousand cats, swept aside like rag dolls, their ghostly trajectories still hanging in the air. A pitbull, upturned and swollen by the sun into a ghoulish balloon. Hunched vultures squabble over rib-cage ceviche, cackling as a passing 4x4 almost adds you to their buffet.

These aren't roads. They're cemeteries. And with every unmarked grave, our own fragility comes into sharper focus. Raccoon, deer, cat, beaver... human? The eyes play tricks after a while, as exhaustion blurs the line between sub-conscious and conscious. Deer, stoat, weasel... me? Was that me, in that ditch? I thought I was better looking. But no, it couldn't be me—I'm still in pain. If I was dead, I couldn't feel that; couldn't feel anything. No, I'm still here, at least for the next few miles.

To cycle is to move among death. It is always there, lying smashed up in a ditch, or painted white and chained to a railing. The trick is to let it sharpen, not intimidate you. To know that the grim reaper cycles on a tandem with all of us, but to keep riding in spite of it.



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JUST ANOTHER COMMUNITY BICYCLE SHOP AND PROGRAM?

Words & Photos by David Hoffman



Jelani Bertoni

The Bicycle Works is nestled along Bicycle Route 20 in the Town of San Anselmo, California—just north from San Francisco, over the Golden Gate Bridge. Bicycle Route 20 is one of the major East/West bicycling corridors in Marin, a county famous for Redwood Trees, Lucasfilm’s Skywalker Ranch, plenty of expensive imported cars, and being the birthplace of the mountain bike. Hundreds of people ride past The Bicycle Works daily—and more often than commonly seen, on cargo bikes. The Bicycle Works has been a hub of cycling activity for the past three years, serving the community and doing pioneering work on electric cargo bikes.

Step into The Bicycle Works and the first thing that you’ll notice is a whirlwind of activity and sounds. An eclectic mix of Hip Hop and Big Band Era music rotates through the sound system while youth, their parents, adults, staff, and curious passersby filter in and out of the shop. Look around and you’ll notice rows of bikes and frames hanging from the rafters, a long workbench with truing stands and tools neatly hung on pegboard, collections of tires, bins of parts sorted and labeled. A counter near the front has curious and hard-to-find bike parts for sale under glass. A single “Anonymus” mask grins down at a man working on one of the wheel stands. Even an Atari “Paperboy” video game console from the 1980s stands in the corner. It’s a retro-DIY-youth-friendly-neighborhood-and-community-serving-bike-shop, and it has all the hallmarks of a collective space where people unite to make the world a better place.

The Bicycle Works isn’t only expanding into the space next door, they’re preparing to open the first electric cargo bike rental program in the country. Cargo bikes—both human powered and electric

assist—fill the space. Electric assist hubs, longboards, Xtracycles, Yubas, Bullitts and every manner of accessory for cargo bikes fill the space. In a back corner wood and metalworking machinery stand ready to custom fabricate parts. Battery chargers crowd outlet spaces. In the center of this all stands Jelani Bertoni ready to introduce and initiate you into the world of electric assist cargo bikes.

AT THE HUB OF IT ALL...

For the last three years, Jelani Bertoni has been a guiding force behind The Bicycle Works. Bertoni's connection with bicycles was cemented while attending college at the University of Santa Cruz. UC Santa Cruz sits atop a large hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean and one day standing in line for the bus that would take him to the top of the hill he noticed a bicyclist ride by, up towards campus. Standing in line to get off the bus the very same bicyclist rode by.

"Immediately after, I went to the Bargain Barn and bought a bike for \$5," said Bertoni. "Then I went to the Bike Church and learned how to fix and maintain it. From that time on, I rode to class every day. Over the course of the next two and half years I put about \$400 and hours and hours of work into it. I learned to do all the work myself, and it was so much better than owning a car."

THE PROGRAM

Most volunteer-run community bicycle programs rely on the combination of a core of dedicated and passionate founders, a regiment of super-volunteers, access to borrowed, inexpensive, or free space, sales of donated bikes and support from the community in order to keep the doors open. The Bicycle Works is taking things a step further by not only adding a retail component to the organization where new cargo bikes are sold, but also creating a new program where mem-



bers and the public can rent electric cargo bikes, perhaps the first rental program of its kind in the United States.

"My strategy is to fund The Bicycle Works by generating our own revenue, performing services, and selling bikes so that we don't have to keep applying for grants or asking for handouts," said Bertoni. "If we can be selling bikes to generate revenue that's what we want. Also, electric cargo bikes fit into our grander vision of getting people out of their cars. This is the kind of bike that can really do that on a local scale. These are bikes that can function on a daily basis, that are powerful, can get people through traffic, and can carry a refrigerator—that's pretty darn cool. There's no other place where people can try out a huge variety of cargo bikes. As a matter of fact, I often try to carry things on my bike just so that people get used to seeing that it can be done."

I asked Jelani about how sustainable The Bicycle Works is after three years of being open. He paused, thinking about how to answer the question. I could see that he was replaying the past three years in his head before answering.

"At first, it was really, really hand-to-mouth. A lot

of people that I approached liked the idea, but few were willing to actually get their hands dirty. We started off with a lot of classes and reaching out into the community. It's been slow, but momentum has really been building, lately. Right now we have about 250 members, and that's about half of what we need to really be sustainable—you know, to be able to pay the rent and utilities, keep the lights on, etc.” (Membership costs \$100 per year, with full access to the shop and tools as well as discounts on service rates, parts, and accessories.)

“We have three staff members including myself. Staffing is funded through selling bikes on consignment, parts, services, as well as through the sale of new cargo bikes. In fact, we're the #1 Xtracycle dealer in the country for a bike shop that doesn't do internet sales. We're the #3 Yuba dealer in the country with only Joe Bike in Portland, OR, and Mike's Bikes with more than a dozen locations here in the San Francisco Bay Area selling more than us. We're pretty proud of that. This year we sold about 75 cargo bikes, and while that may not seem like a very big number, it's a huge number for a single shop that primarily serves the local community.”

I asked about whom The Bicycle Works actually serves. After all, Marin County is one of the wealthiest counties in the nation. For example, the median house price in Marin is nearly \$841,000 for owner-occupied properties. Did the community really need a community bicycle program? Jelani looked at me for a moment with what I imagined to be a note of disappointment on his face for asking this question. “Families are our mainstay. A lot of them have kids—based on the demographics of this area—there are a lot of kids in Marin. Most people wouldn't think of starting a non-profit bike cooperative in an area like this—this is more common in college towns, or in areas with low-income or underserved populations. The economic spectrum is skewed up in this area.” And then Jelani's whole demeanor changed. “But there are people who are in need here in Marin. Part of our mission is to serve all of these groups—those in need, those with families, immigrants, those who do not have money as well as those who do have money. We even had Robin Williams hanging out... I think it's important to have a space where we can have a large cross-section of people. That's why we have bikes that we can give away for free, or bikes in the \$1000-\$5000 range for some

of the purpose-built bikes.”

At this point, as if on cue, the phone rings, and Jelani becomes engaged with a person who is asking about how to get a free bike. Settling back in, the conversation turns to the electric cargo bike rental program.

THE LONG HAUL

“We are starting a rental program as we've been pushing the electric and cargo bikes. We let people ride them every day. If someone wants to borrow one for a day, or even a week, it's a lot harder for us as we have a limited number of them here. We had been brewing up how to get people on the purpose built bikes from the very beginning. Then one day Michael Bock showed up and left a couple of electric bikes here. Michael has been a big driving force in getting us up to speed.”

“Michael is a local guy—a master woodworker by trade and not an engineer. He basically did five years of research on his own, buying every system he could find, running it into the ground, seeing if he could destroy it, and finally came up with things that worked. He's transferred those skills and a dedication to the environment—and the connections that he's made—he's opened up his connections to us. He's a co-conspirator of sorts along with Justin Lemire-Elmore from Grin Tech in Vancouver, BC. Justin has done a tremendous amount of work in the open source DIY world of electric bikes. He's the mastermind engineer behind most of what we're using here. Of course, most of this stuff is sourced from China, but after getting a degree in engineering he started taking them all apart, rewiring them, reengineering them, and then sending the specs back to the manufacturers who are making them. He developed the Cycle Analyst, that's a key element for any enthusiast, it shows what's going on with your battery, how many amps are you drawing, what kind of Wattage are you using, how many cycles do you have on your system and so forth. Justin has been working with Michael Bock and Xtracycle to develop the EdgeRunner, an electrified Xtracycle, and we have one of the first ones here. We're near the epicenter of a lot of this phenomenal work.”

I'll admit that I'm a gadget and electronics geek; all of the technical stuff is cool, but at the end of the day how will all of this come together as a rental program? Do you think that there is really a market for electric

cargo bike rentals? “There aren’t a whole lot of folks that can drop several thousand dollars to get one of these bikes, but there are lots of people who could drop \$40 a day or \$200 a week to rent and try one of these bikes out. You know, try it for a week and see what it’s like. They’re probably already interested in cargo bikes but they don’t know yet how they will fit in their day-to-day lives. Renting one of these bikes and taking it out for more than just a few hours will give them a taste of what it is really like. This is less of a standard bike rental program in the traditional sense where people rent bikes for a few hours after going on a scenic ride, but more of an extended loaner program so that people can really try the bikes.”


“Here’s how it works: if you’re part of the general public then the rental is \$40 a day; for The Bicycle Works members, it’s only \$20 a day. If you want to rent for a week then it is \$200 for the general public but only \$100 for members. As membership in The Bicycle Works is only \$100 for a year, we think that we may also be able to increase our membership as the discounts on electric cargo bike rentals may be an incentive that will help more people to join the cooperative.”

“The bikes that we chose for the rental bikes are Juiced Riders. They are a low barrier bike, the idea being that the design contributes to these barriers, so it’s a step-through frame, comfortable riding position, a very powerful motor, long range 48-volt battery pack, with 20-inch wheels, lots of torque and climbing power, three speed with grip shifts and a single cruise control button. It has a longtail cargo rack. It’s a bike that you can use for a lot of different activities. We think they’re a lot less intimidating than the front-loading cargo bikes and make a nice entry point as a rental. And if the Juiced Rider isn’t right for the customer, we have lot of other options that they can choose from with the other bikes here.”

Parked outside of The Bicycle Works was an incredible hand-made cargo bike that was clearly still in the process of being finished; marker pen and measurements were still on the tubing, the braze-ons looked fresh. Jelani was chatting next to this bike with one of the folks that had been instrumental in providing some seed funding for the first round of rental cargo bikes through a local foundation; he told me to go inside and meet Cameron Falconer, who was making the bike.

As it turns out, Cameron is the guy that made Jelani’s “daily driver” cargo bike, and he had come to the shop to chat with Jelani and show him his latest project. Cameron encouraged me to take his bike for a test ride, and I did. Soon after, Paul, one of the employees was taking it for a spin. The enthusiasm for these bikes is contagious at The Bicycle Works. Without too much trouble, I could easily see myself using a cargo bike for most of my errands and shopping.

Jelani had some final thoughts on this very notion. “I moved my house using a Worksmans front-loading cargo trike not too long ago. I try, as a spectacle, to put lots of things on my bike. Just the other day I put a 250 lb oak desk on it and rode that here. I’ve moved a refrigerator, a couch, even a Hammond organ. For events that we attend I bring the entire booth on the cargo bike. It’s not always practical at times—sometimes it would be easier just to throw the thing in a truck, but I want people to think about what they can do with a bike.”

People are doing more than just thinking about it at The Bicycle Works. They’re in it for the long haul. 

NO EXIT © Andy Singer



BB Height Vs. Drop

By Brad Quartuccio



Bottom bracket height affects bicycle stability and pedaling clearance, and is an important specification to consider when choosing a frame or otherwise looking at geometry charts. Generally speaking, road and touring bikes have low bottom brackets for stability over the long haul, while track and mountain bikes sit higher for ground and cornering clearance. Confusion may arise when comparing geometry specifications from different manufacturers as some quote bottom bracket height and others quote bottom bracket drop, here we explain the relationship between the two.

Bottom Bracket Drop - Defined as the vertical distance between the wheel axle and the center of the bottom bracket spindle. Bottom bracket drop is a fixed measurement of how far the bottom bracket hangs below the axles, determined by the frame geometry and does not change with tire choice. Convention states that bottom bracket drop is expressed as a positive number when the bottom bracket is

below the plane of the wheels as shown above—a bottom bracket drop of zero would be level with the axles, a negative bottom bracket drop would place the bottom bracket above the axles. Bottom bracket drop can be determined by subtracting the bottom bracket height from the radius of the wheel and tire combination.

Bottom Bracket Height - Defined as the vertical distance between the ground and the center of the bottom bracket spindle. This is a relative measurement, in that bottom bracket height is influenced by tire volume. In practice the tire choices available for most frames do not vary enough to drastically alter bottom bracket height, but in the case of cyclocross and mountain frames that can accept a wide variety of tire sizes it is worth considering how your tire choice may affect the quoted bottom bracket height. Bottom bracket height can be determined by subtracting the bottom bracket drop from the radius of the wheel and tire combination.





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DIY Shoe Dryer

By Brad Quartuccio

Arriving with wet shoes is an inevitable part of bike commuting—sometimes you're just going to have to pedal through the rain. Putting those wet shoes back on hours later never feels good, no matter the temperature. Putting your shoes on a heating vent or radiator may work, but can lead to cracked leather and stressed synthetic uppers. And while dedicated shoe and boot dryers exist, few have the luxury to have them on hand. Stuffing your wet shoes with newspaper works remarkably well to help them dry quickly. The thin newsprint wicks water out of the shoes and exponentially increases the evaporative surface area. For thoroughly soaked shoes one can speed up the process even further by swapping the paper out a time or two throughout the day. Shoes that used to take an entire 24 hour cycle to dry can be made tolerable in just hours, all for the price of yesterday's news. 



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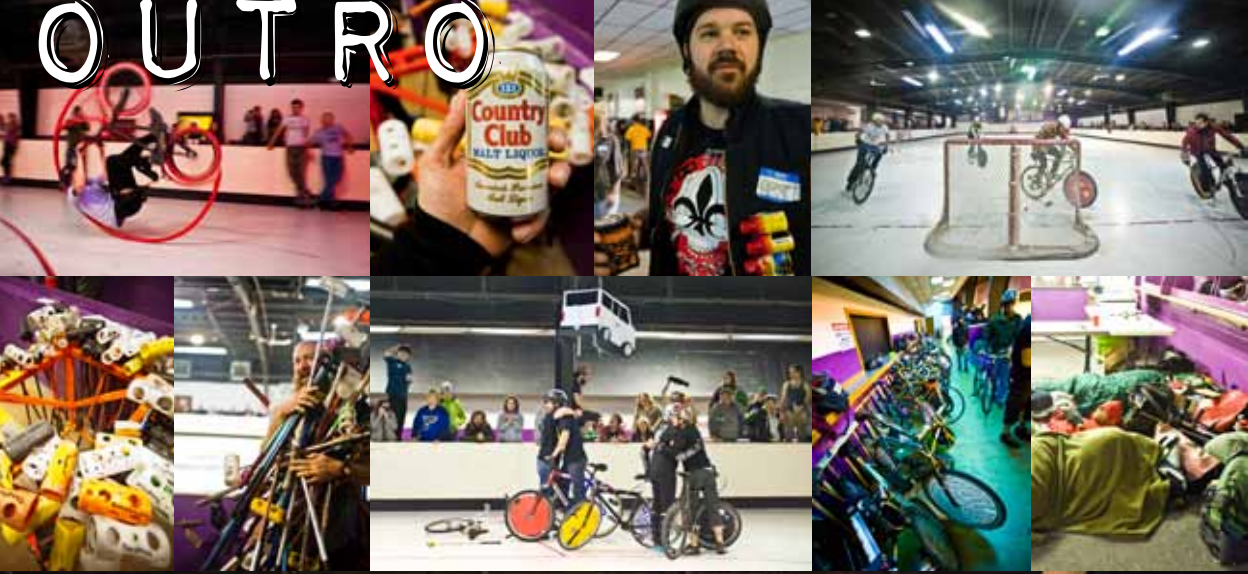
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OUTRO



What started as a one-time, epic indoor dead of winter pick-up session and party at the St. Louis Skatium has become so much more. For the hundred or so that make the cut each year the Lock-In has become a gathering of the less than serious players and more than serious partiers that make up the polo tribe.

Noon Saturday until noon Sunday, the only 24-hour pick-up bike polo session of its kind. Think 4 AM games under skating rink disco lights, center court dance parties, and drunken pinata smashing. Anything goes, an overall surreal experience, and an event like none other. Photos from the 2010, 2012 and 2013 Lock-In. -Brad Quartuccio



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